

ENVISIONING COLLABORATIVE SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR RURAL EDUCATORS

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE ---QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- Where are now?
 - Where do we hope to go?
 - What do we hope to accomplish?
 - Exploring a way to get there
- How are rural educators supported and prepared?
 - What are the challenges and opportunities inherent in university partnerships supporting rural educator preparation?
 - In what ways can partners influence policy, professional development, and research in rural education?
 - What should the goals of a regional rural collaborative include?
 - What does success look like in 10 years in rural education?

THE BEGINNING OF RURAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH ECU

- Wahl Coates Elementary School: University Lab School for Student Teacher placements
- 1993: Model Clinical Teaching Program - Pilot of extended student teaching model
- 1996: East Carolina University Clinical Schools Network established
- 1996-1997: Full-year Internship Model implemented in all program areas
- 2000: ECU Clinical Schools Network is endowed; Latham Clinical Schools Network, 9 school systems
- 2002: Partnership East, a 2+2 degree completion delivery model established
- 2017: Network includes 43 school systems; advisory board, monthly meetings
- Fall 2017: ECU Lab School opens for 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

- Early College Awareness – MS and HS AVID Days (2 each semester, 200-300 participants/each event)
- Counselor Connections – FA, Admissions, Scholarships, Honors College, ELLC/ECOS
- Teacher Recruitment – iTech Day
- Open House, extended Open House, MADE, Pirates Aboard
- School visits, HS Career and College Fairs
- IHE/DPI Regional Collaborative Meetings
- Northeast Collaborative Meetings, BT Conference site host
- Grants for Teacher Preparation, Special Education, STEM, Mursion, New Teacher Support with partners

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION: RURAL EDUCATION INSTITUTE

- The Rural Education Institute at ECU will serve as the epicenter of rural education *research, teacher support, and outreach*. Over the next five years, the Institute will leverage research-practice partnerships to address educational disparities and ensure access to high quality instruction in rural areas.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RURAL EDUCATION INSTITUTE: NOW

- Established In 1982, with a grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation
 - Developed to increase awareness of the unique strengths and needs of rural schools in eastern North Carolina.
- In 1984 the North Carolina General Assembly appropriated funds for ECU's REI and established a counterpart at WCU. REI provided support in curriculum, management, organizational, personnel, technology, policy, and risk management audits for public school systems.
- In July 2002, REI was reorganized to align the institute with several national organizations and universities that focus on rural education issues.
- With shifts in funding and priorities, REI currently focuses support to the Latham Clinical Schools Network on conferences and outreach initiatives for students from the region.
- These efforts are intended to strengthen the college's clinical partners' PK-12 educational opportunities and to recruit, prepare, and support teachers in rural eastern North Carolina. This work will remain under the Office of Educator Preparation.
- REI has recently been moved under the Dean's office as a college-wide initiative and is under revisioning to better meet the needs of our school-university-community partnerships.

RURAL PROSPERITY INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMIC DISPARITIES

- ECU is focusing its extensive research and engagement expertise on finding solutions to the extraordinary disparities in health, education and economic development in rural and coastal North Carolina communities.
- A first-ever effort to marshal the combined resources of 12 East Carolina University colleges and schools, 14 centers and institutes and university partners behind a single, coordinated campaign.
- “A core mission of this university since it was established in 1907 was to serve the needs of rural, eastern North Carolina counties, initially by filling an enormous need for teachers and later by adding a medical school, a dental school and other initiatives focused on serving under-developed areas” (Chancellor Cecil Staton).
- “These efforts were enormously successful, and today this university produces more teachers, principals and education professionals, more primary care physicians who stay in North Carolina and more dentists serving rural areas than any other university in the state” (Staton)

RURILITY: BY THE NUMBERS

- Nationally:
 - urban areas gained 1.2 million jobs in 2016, rural counties lost 90,000 jobs
 - Eight out of 10 jobs created in 2016 were in the 51 metropolitan areas of a million people or more.
 - Nearly 72 percent of U.S. land area is rural, including 1,976 counties
 - People have been abandoning these areas for years, but 46 million Americans remain, with a poverty rate triple that in urban areas.
- North Carolina:
 - 80 of our state's 100 counties are classified as rural
 - Eastern NC: more than 16 percent of adults over age 25 have less than a high school education.
- People in eastern North Carolina counties have:
 - a 50 percent greater mortality rate from diabetes than the U.S. average,
 - a 30 percent higher rate of lung cancer mortality,
 - a 16.6 percent higher rate of mortality for all cancers, and
 - a 38.4 percent higher mortality rate for strokes.

Data by Dr. Jay Golden, vice chancellor for research, economic development, and engagement

ECU'S RURAL PROSPERITY INITIATIVE - RPI



REVISIONING THE RURAL EDUCATION INSTITUTE

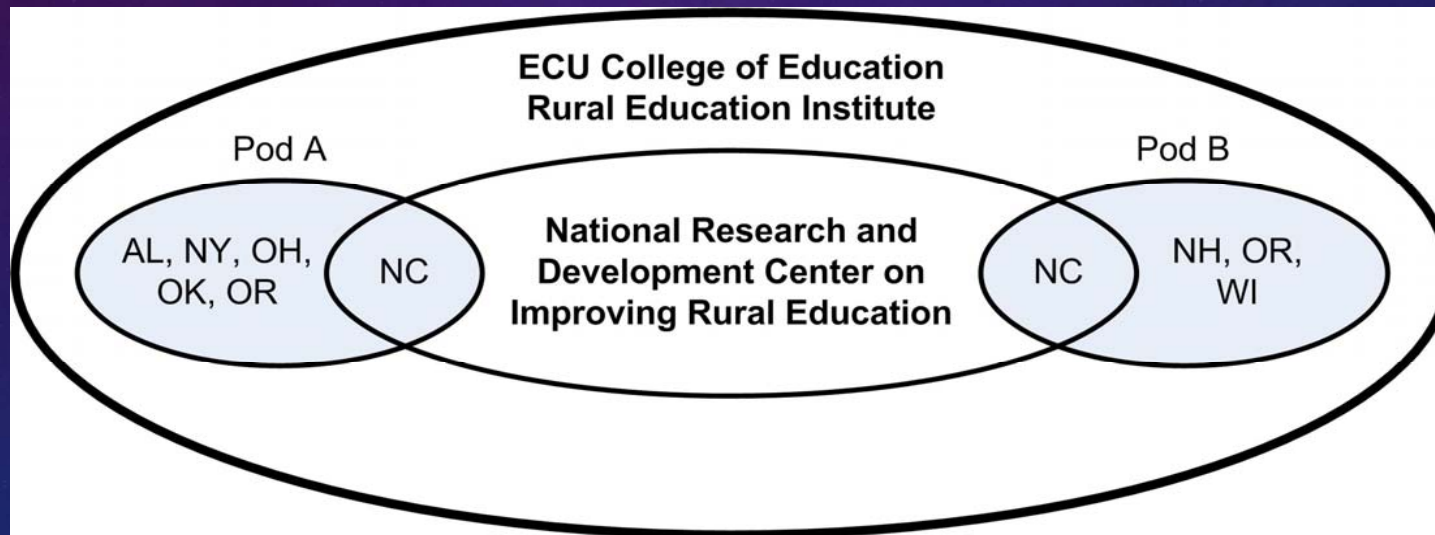
- Elevate ECU's response to its founding mission to education (health and economic issues) in rural NC
- To serve as a national model for rural research and engagement (in education)
- Integrate work with the University's RPI "enabling" research clusters, Education and Big Data & Analytics, which cut across RPI's five thematic clusters
- REI is a major catalyst for improvement in the region, establishing collaborative partnerships to address educator preparation and school improvement
- ECU serves twice as many UG students from rural communities as any of the 16 UNC system campuses

RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH GAPS

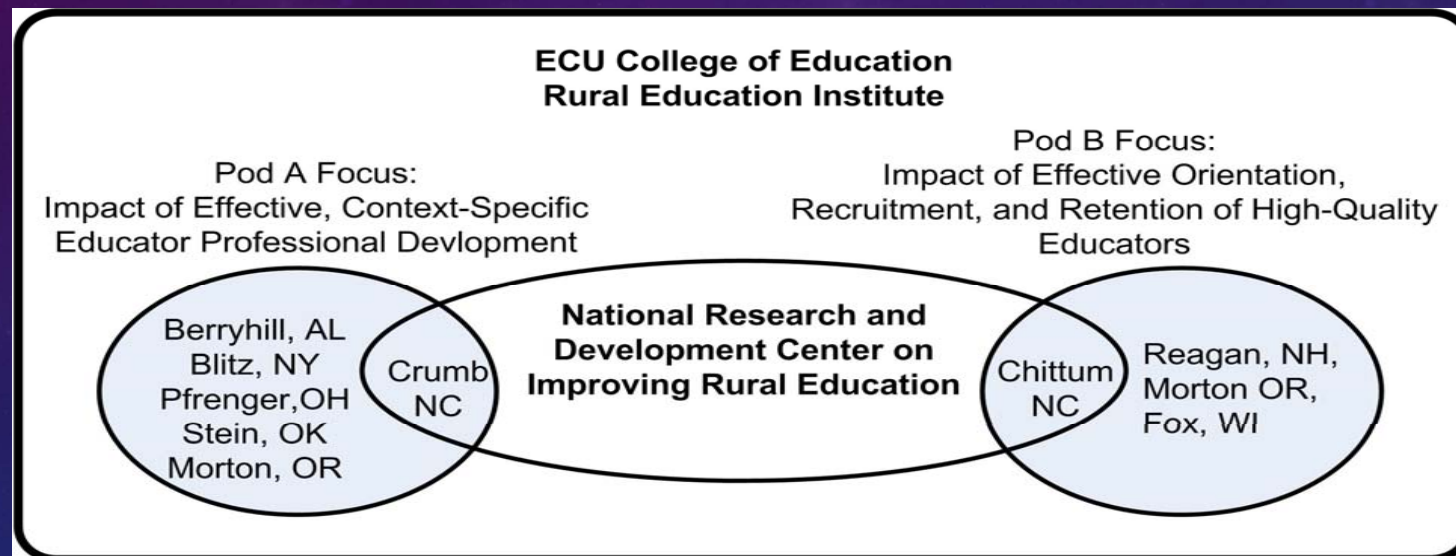
- Limited applicability of research conducted outside of the rural context
- Rural research is complicated by the “often dramatic ways that rural schools differ from each other (Greenough & Nelson, 2015, p 32)
- Characteristics of remoteness, average school and district population and location size, poverty rates, diversity of students, and shifting district enrollments – all vary in school identified as rural under the U. S. DOE definition
- Demographics for students in Rural Fringe schools are very different from those in Rural Distant and Rural remote schools (NREA, 2014).
- One-third of U.S. schools are classified as rural, yet the majority of education research reflects non-rural settings (Parsley & Barton, 2015)

GOING NATIONAL

- Taking REI to REI-NRDC: National Research and Development Center
- Connect two Pods of researchers from eight states



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION



POD A FOCUS

Pod A members will engage their partner LEAs to develop and implement culturally responsive, trauma-informed professional development and mentoring for LEA staff, specifically adapted to the local context. LEAs will participate in all phases of the project from focusing research questions and methods, data collection, to developing locally relevant materials and processes.

POD B FOCUS

Pod B will determine the associations among: 1) teachers'/administrators' orientations to educating in rural places, 2) school districts' recruitment policies and processes, 3) teacher/administrator retention, 4) implementation of data-informed decision-making to promote academic achievement, and (a) students' academic achievement, (b) students' social functioning, and (c) school/community/family relationships.

REI-NRDC – TARGET 5 OF THE 10 NREA RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR 2016-2021

- Access to counseling/mental health/chemical dependency services
- Data-driven decision-making to improve student educational attainment
- Rural school and community/family relations
- Teacher/Leader preparation for rural schools
- Teacher/Leaders recruitment and retention

MAJOR CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

- Lack of access to counseling and behavioral mental health services
- Challenges of providing professional development to help educators use large amounts of student data to inform teaching and learning
- Lack of or remoteness of resources at the family, school, and community levels
- Teacher preparation, recruitment, and retention issues due to rural isolation and local capacity shortfalls
- Geographical remoteness of schools creating obstacles to instructional coaching and mentoring

OUR HOPE AND OUR WORK

- Secure funding to build a national center for Rural Education Initiatives
- Create authentic dialogue and solve real problems in the context of rural schools
- Assist rural partners in improving teaching, leading, and student learning

LEA PERSPECTIVE, Q & A, AND DISCUSSION

- Comments from one of our LEA /Collaborative Partner – Mr. Ralph Evans, Northeast Collaborative
- Comments/questions from the audience
- Conversation about what would success look like in 10+ years in rural districts?